

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 04958 181745Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 W
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9782

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4958

EXDIS

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION KINSHASA FROM LUBUMBASHI MAY 18
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE
C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0505

EXDIS

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS PINS CG CASC
SUBJ: SHABA ATTACK: CONSULTATIONS WITH BELGIANS AND FRENCH ON
POSSIBLE RESCUE OPERATIONS

REF: A. KINSHASA 4931, B. KINSHASA 4920, C. LUB 493, D. KINSHASA
4940

1. HAD NOT SEEN REF A AND B WHEN REF C SENT ON MAY 17.

2. I HAVE BEEN MEETING EACH MORNING AT 0900 WITH PICQUET, SOREL
AND ROCHER OF GCM, BAUDOUR OF SNCZ, AND VAN MOSSEVELDE, THE
BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL, TO DISCUSS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.
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FRENCH CONSUL GENERAI W NOT PRSENT, BUT ROCHER SEEMS TO PRESENT
FRENCH POSITION. MOST OF INORMATION DISCUSSED IN PARA 2 OF REFTL
B HAS BEEN AIRED IN THESE MEETINGS ANS SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED. I
HAVE ALSO BEEN VISITING PICQUET, WHO LIVES ACROSS THE STREET, IN
THE EVENINGS AKTER CUREJPOR UPDATINGS ON SITUATION.

3. BELGIAN CONSUL GENERAL IS GENERALLY RESERVED AND ALM,

BUT LIKE MOST OTHERS HAS BEEN VERY UPSET BY THE SITUATION. REPORT AS QUOTED PARA 4 OF REF A SEEMS SLIGHT EXAGGERATION OF SITUATIONQ CONSULATE IS UNCERTAIN OF NUMBER OF EUROPEANS KILLED, BUT WE WOULD PLACE FIGURE CLOSER TO 10-25 AS OF 1800 ON MAY 17. FIGHTING HAS APPARENTLY RESUMED TODAY WHICH MEANS ADDITIONAL CASUALTIES. ONE OF MORE DISTURBING ASPECTS OF FIGHTING HAS BEEN THAT SEVERAL EUROPEANS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN INTENTIONALLY KILLED FOR REFUSING TO COOPERATE RATHER THAN AS ACCIDENTAL VICTIMS CAUGHT BETWEEN OPPOSING MILITARY FORCES. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN REPMKTS OF FURTHER HOUSE TO HOUSE SEARCHES FOR FRENCH CITIZENS, BUT THEY ARE NOT CONFIRMED. BELGIAN CONGEN SENT HIS DEPUTY TO LIKASI TO OFFER CALMING ASSURANCES TO POPULATION. THERE HAD BEEN NO "SERIOUS DETERIORATION" IN THE SITUATION, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY PEOPLE ARE IPCRISINGLY NERVOUS. AS NOTED REFTTEL C, I SUSPECTED HE WAS PUSHING FOR A MILITARY OPERATION AND SEEKING THAT I MAKE SIMILAR STRONG REQUEST.

4. LOCAL FAZ AUTHORITIES HAVE INFORMED US THAT INVADERS ARE HOLDING 12 HOSTAGES (INCLUDING 8 BELGIANS, 1 CANADIAN, 1 ITALIAN, 1 FRENCH, AND 1 OF UNKNOWN NATIONALITY). UNKNOWN MIGHT BE AMERICAN TOURIST WHO WAS STAYING AT IMPALA MOTEL. FAZ SAID THEY SUSPECT THE UNKNOWN MIGHT BE AN AMERICAN. INTERESTING, THIS ZAIRIAN SOURCE LISTED NO ZAIRIANS AMONG HOSTAGES, ADDING PROOF TO LOCAL EUROPEAN CONCERN THAT INVADERS' HOSTILITIES ARE DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST EUROPEANS.

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5. AS NOTED IN LUBUMBASI SITREP OF MAY 18, GECAMINES KOLWEZI REP RENARD WAS ALLOWED TO PASS A MESSAGE SAYING THAT INVADERS EXPECTED A FOREIGN PARACHUTE DROP AND THIS WOULD BE CONSIDERED AN ACT OF WAR. WHEN PICQUET, VAN MOSSEVELDE AND OTHERS WERE ASKED WHETHER THIS THREAT COULD MODIFY THEIR VIEW ON DESIREABILITY OF FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION, THEY SAID SUCH THREATS WHICH THEY THOUGHT WERE AIMED AT PERHAPS SMALL NUMBER OF HOSTAGES WERE SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS.

6. LUBUMBASHI DURING AFTERNOON OF MAY 18 ALIVE WITH RUMORS THAT BELGIAN/FRENCH JOINT PARACHUTE DROP HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE AND THAT PEPLE OF LIKASI SHOULD PREPARE THEIR HOMES TO RECEIVE REFUGEES. RUMORS FED BY RADIO BROWDCASTS THAT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IS IMMINENT. REF D ALSO INDICATES ACTION IS LIKELY. INVADING FORC IS CERTAINLY AWARE OF REPORTS/RUMORS AND LIKELY TO TAKE APPROPRIATE DEFENSIVE MEASURES.

7. DESPITE POSSIBLE EXAGGERATIONS OF THE SITUATION BY BELGIAN CONGEN, THE SITUATION IN KOLWEZI REMAINS SEROUS. EACH DAY THERE ARE ADDITIONAL CASUALTIES, FURTHER EMOTIONAL STRESS, AND SMALLER STOCKS OF FOOD. AM UNCERTAIN ABOUT SUCCESS OF FAZ OPERATIONS ON MAY MQIM IF FAZ CAN MOVE QUICKLY TO RELIEVE KOLWEZI AND DISPERSE

REBELS, PROBLEM OF PRISONERS WILL RESOLVE ITSELF, THOUGH PROBABLY
WITH MANY ADDITIONAL CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. FAZ RECAPTURED AIRPORT ON
MAY 17 AND THEREZRAS FIGHTING NEAR TOWN ON MAY 18 ACCORDING TO
LOCAL FAZ SOURCES, BUT BY END OF DAY WHEN FIGHTING STOPPED
NO INDICATION OF A CHANGE IN BATTTL LINES. IF FAZ DOES NOT SUCCEED,
WILL THEY BE ABLE TO MOUNT A SECOND OFFENSIVE? THERE IS LITTE
OPTIMISM HERE. AS IMPORTANT, WILL THE FAZ DISCIPLINE HOLD? IF
THERE IS A STANDOFF WITH FAZ SURROUNDING BESEIGED INVADER-
HELD TOWN, LOSER WILL BE CIVILIANS INSIDE TOWN. CONSULATE
BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT IF IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT FAZ CAN ACT
WITH DUE SPEED TO RETAKE ALL OF KOLWEZI, THAT FOREIGN INTERVENTION
PROBABLY OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO RELIEVE TOWN WITH MINIMUM CAUSALTIES
AND URGES US SUPPORT FOR SUCH ACTION.

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